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ADOPTED
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Text Amendment Application No.
Boston Redevelopment Authority
Interim Office Use Controls
in Manufacturing and
Industrial Districts

TO THE ZONING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BOSTON:

The Boston Redevelopment Authority petitions to amend the text of the Boston Zoning Code as follows:

By striking out, in Article 34, Section 34-7, the words "twelve (12)" and by inserting in place thereof the words:

twenty-four (24).

Petitioner: Boston Redevelopment Authority

By: _____
Stephen Coyle, Director

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Date: _____

MEMORANDUM MARCH 23, 1989

TO: BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND
STEPHEN COYLE, DIRECTOR

FROM: LINDA S. BOURQUE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR
NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING AND ZONING
GAY FORBES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR
NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING AND ZONING

SUBJECT: EXTEND ARTICLE 34 MAKING OFFICE USES CONDITIONAL IN MANUFACTURING AND INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICTS FOR AN ADDITIONAL ONE-YEAR PERIOD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Article 34 of the Zoning Code makes office uses conditional in manufacturing and industrial zoning districts for a period of twelve months from its effective date. It is scheduled to expire on April 29, 1989. Its provisions are still necessary to protect the manufacturing economy while comprehensive planning is conducted and the Light Manufacturing Zone is mapped. An amendment to Article 34 extending it for one year will provide the necessary protection.

Article 34, Interim Office Use Controls, became effective on April 29, 1988, for a period of one year. This article makes office uses conditional in manufacturing and industrial districts on an interim basis with the exception of certain biomedical research uses.

The major objective of this amendment is to protect manufacturing and industrial zoning districts from piecemeal conversion to more competitive office uses while comprehensive planning studies are being conducted, and thereby to foster a balanced economy with varied job opportunities. This amendment was the first step in protecting manufacturing opportunities. The new Light Manufacturing District, which became effective on February 1, 1989, but which has not yet been mapped, is the second step.

The next step will be the actual mapping of new light manufacturing districts through a comprehensive public review process to be accomplished through the Interim Planning and rezoning process underway in several areas of the City. Until this occurs, however, manufacturing uses are still vulnerable to being replaced by office uses unless the protections of Article 34 are extended. The Fort Point Channel area, for which Interim Zoning is

contemplated, is of particular concern because of the high concentration of manufacturing and maritime-related uses in such close proximity to the Downtown. By continuing to treat office uses as conditional in these areas, office uses may be approved on a case by case basis as appropriate without detriment to existing manufacturing uses.

Between 1977 and 1985, the number of manufacturing firms within the City of Boston dropped from approximately 1,311 to 885, and the number of persons employed in these firms dropped from 56,798 to 48,323. While the total figures show a drop in manufacturing in Boston, it is not due to lack of demand for these industries or their products. EDIC has observed sustained growth in certain sectors of Boston's manufacturing industry. In particular, the printing and publishing, fish and food processing, apparel and medical technology industries are expected to expand greatly in the next several years. This demand will be generated by the growing office, hotel/convention, health and medical, and other service economies. It is projected that by the year 2000, there will be an additional 15 to 17 million square feet of office space, 12,000 additional hotel rooms, and an increase in population by 100,000 persons. The space needs of the medical research economy are expected to double to 3 million square feet in the next five years. Health care and medical industries will demand products from specialized manufacturers such as medical instrument makers, which in turn demand products from traditional manufacturers such as metal fabricators and corrugated box makers. Immediate access to the service sector already has spurred growth among Boston's smaller specialized manufacturers and traditional manufacturing firms. Increased manufacturing activity has created good jobs for Boston's blue-collar workers, contributed to the current service sector growth, and created an environment that will sustain the growth of both sectors.

One of the primary causes for the loss of manufacturing firms and jobs in Boston is the competition for land between manufacturing uses and office uses that expand into manufacturing zones. Since manufacturers cannot afford the same land costs or lease payments as can office users, their financial opportunity to locate within the City or expand within the City is becoming increasingly limited. At the same time, availability of suitable land for manufacturing is declining. In a November, 1987, BRA/EDIC survey of manufacturing firms in the Fort Point Channel/South Boston area, sixty-eight firms indicated that they would be relocating outside of Boston in the next five years, and cited lease instability, rising rents, and lack of expansion space as the primary factors causing their migration from the City. While direct conversion of manufacturing areas to office areas has significantly reduced available manufacturing space, speculation in anticipation of conversion also is a serious problem facing the manufacturing sector.

While expanding office space within the City, particularly to areas outside the Downtown financial core, is not in itself

negative, there must be a balance between the two uses and consideration given to the real loss of manufacturing jobs and the potential loss through decreased available land area.

In addition, office uses can generate a significant volume of vehicular traffic. By making such uses conditional, the impact of traffic on an area and remedies to potential congestion and parking problems can be reviewed and required as part of a conditional use permit.

Staff, therefore, recommends that the protections of Article 34, making office uses conditional rather than allowed in manufacturing and industrial zoning districts, be extended for a period of one year while planning takes place. This would allow the City and community to review individual proposals to determine the appropriateness of each in a manufacturing district, and the positive or negative effect on the manufacturing industry of such a proposal. Making office uses conditional would require that such a proposal receive a permit from the Board of Appeal and that the proponent follow the Board of Appeal process for community review and recommendations from the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

A recommended vote follows:

VOTED: That the Director is authorized to petition the Zoning Commission to adopt an amendment to Article 34, extending Interim Office Controls for a period of one year from April 29, 1989, while planning is being conducted to review the manufacturing zoning districts throughout several of Boston's neighborhoods.